

Concert won't affect status of Kashmir

NC yet to take decision on pre-poll alliance with Cong: Omar

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Sept 2: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today said that his party is yet to take a decision on a pre-poll alliance for the forthcoming Assembly elections with its coalition partner Congress.

While speaking to the reporters on the sidelines of Investiture Ceremony held at Raj Bhavan, the Chief Minister, who is also working president of the National Conference, said: "National Conference has not taken a decision yet on a pre-poll alliance with Congress."

Omar was responding to questions about reports that his coalition partner in the State Government, Congress at a party meeting in Jammu, has decided to go it alone in the next Assembly elections.

The Chief Minister when asked if there were any differences between NC and Congress over the issue, said: "There is no tension. There is still some time to go for the Assembly elections."

Omar said that the NC has given the responsibility to party patron Dr Farooq

Abdullah to take a decision on pre-poll alliance. "Whatever decision he takes will be followed," he added.

National Conference and Congress entered into a post-poll alliance following a hung Assembly in 2008 Assembly



elections. Although the coalition has functioned smoothly for most part of the past four and half years, there have been occasions when leaders from the two parties have traded charges.

The two parties contested the recent elections to the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Kargil against each other with Congress getting

together enough members to take control of the 26-member council.

In the backdrop of opposition to orchestra conductor Zubin Mehta's concert in the Valley, Omar said music is a part of Kashmiri culture and to present it as outside Kashmiriyat is not right.

"Everyone has political views but music is in our culture. To present it (music) as outside Kashmiriyat is not right," Omar said.

The Chief Minister was responding to questions about opposition from separatists and civil society groups in Kashmir against holding the concert 'Ehsaas-e-Kashmir' (the feel of Kashmir), organised by the German Embassy in Delhi on September 7.

Omar said those claiming that holding a music concert would affect the status of Kashmir issue were themselves weak.

"Either their leadership is weak or the issue is weak that a music concert will affect the status," he said.

(Contd on page 9 Col 5)

NHPC, PDD row on power usage

Despite reminders from Raj Bhavan, PDD yet to submit report

Neeraj Rohmetra

JAMMU, Sept 2: Despite reminders from Raj Bhavan, the Power Development Department (PDD) has failed to furnish report on the ongoing controversy with National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) over payment of charges for electricity used for construction of 390 Mw Dulhasti Hydel Power Project in Kishtwar.

"Though the Governor's Secretariat has sent some reminders to the top officials of the PDD to furnish the factual report on the state of affairs, the latter hasn't yet responded back with necessary details so far", reliable sources confirmed.

Sources stated that the Governor had desired to know the reason of the ongoing stand-off between PDD and NHPC. "A detailed note with several queries had been forwarded to the officials of PDD in the first week of this month", sources added.

A controversy has erupted after NHPC refused to pay Rs 246 crores as charges for electricity consumed during con-

struction of Dulhasti hydel project. "NHPC had drawn electricity from Salal Power Project during the construction of 390 Mw Dulhasti hydel Power Project in Kishtwar without the concurrence of State authorities. However, the State Government had raised serious objections of direct withdrawal of electricity without seeking the consent of PDD".

The State Government officials have claimed that since PDD was the only authorized power distributor of the State, the direct transfer of power from Salal to Dulhasti tantamount to 'illegal' use of power.

"The PDD officials in their communication to the NHPC have claimed that the move of latter to withdraw power from Salal to Dulhasti from 1992 - 2002 amounts to contravention of laid down guidelines for power usage. Subsequently, the State official did a detailed exercise to evaluate the loss to the exchequer on account of illegal transfer of power between the two entities", sources said.

Sources added, "after consid- (Contd on page 9 Col 1)



Members of Kashmir's Lakes and Waterways Authority collect weeds lying on the surface of Dal Lake in Srinagar on Monday. -Excelsior/Amin War

Omar calls on Governor

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 2: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today met Governor N N Vohra at Raj Bhavan here and discussed security issues, including recent infiltration attempts along the Line of Control.

"The Governor and the Chief Minister discussed various issues relating to the continuing attempts at infiltration across the LoC in both the Kashmir and Jammu regions and the incidence of terrorist

(Contd on page 9 Col 5)

Asaram sent to jail

JODHPUR, Sept 2:

Self-styled godman Asaram Bapu, accused of sexually assaulting a 16-year-old girl at his ashram here, was behind bars today after he was remanded in 14-day judicial custody by a local court.

Wearing a white dhoti and kurta and a red skull cap, the controversial 72-year-old Asaram was produced amid tight security before the District and Sessions Court where the Magistrate Manoj Kumar ordered to send him to judicial custody till September 15.

The counsel for Asaram, meanwhile, moved an application for bail and hearing on the plea is expected tomorrow.

Asaram was brought to the court in a police bus escorted by a police vehicle. He was remanded in one-day police custody yesterday after being grilled for four hours.

The religious preacher remained in the court for about 15 minutes before he was taken to Central Jail of Jodhpur near Mohanpura bridge in a convoy of police vehicles after the court order. He was lodged in Barrack No.1. (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

Farooq assures harmony in Kishtwar

NEW DELHI, Sept 2:

National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah, whose party heads the Government in Jammu and Kashmir, today assured Rajya Sabha that all steps would be taken to maintain communal harmony in the State as BJP expressed concern over Kishtwar communal violence there.

"Everything will be done to maintain communal harmony," Abdullah said, noting that the State Government is already getting the incident inquired into by a former judge of the High Court.

He said the Government will act after getting the recommendations. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Avinash Rai Khanna (BJP) demanded due compensation to the affected persons, including businessmen, due to Kishtwar violence.

He said business establishments were looted and set on fire. Now, businessmen have no means to start them afresh. (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

CEOs, others transferred

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 2: The Government has ordered transfers and postings of Chief Education Officers and equivalent rank with immediate effect.

Natha Ram, CEO, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Joint Secretary, Board of School Education.

Abdul Hamid Fani, Joint Secretary, BOSE has been transferred and posted as CEO Poonch.

Mohammad Ashraf, CEO, Poonch has been transferred and posted as Principal DIET, Poonch (Contd on page 9 Col 5)

Employees call for 3 day strike

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 2: Joint Consultative Committee of various employees' unions today called for three day strike to press for implementation of the agreement reached out between employees' leaders and the Government.

In a statement, a spokesman of the amalgam said: "JCC is forced to announce its third phase of agitation as the Government is neglecting their demands despite repeated protests.

The spokesman said all the Government employees will protest on September 9 in Srinagar, Jammu, Leh and Ladakh.

"The employees from Kashmir Division will assemble in Sher-i-Kashmir Park, Srinagar, to take a peaceful march towards Civil Secretariat under the leadership of Abdul Qayoom Wani. On the (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

Rs 50 lakh recovered from Hajeej

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 2: Police recovered Rs 50 lakh from owners of Hajeej who duped Hajj aspirants in 2011 while they had earlier recovered Rs 2.38 crore from them.

Police said that the recovered amount has been deposited in the account of Principal District and Session's Court Srinagar. Earlier Police had recovered an amount of Rs 2.35 crore from (Contd on page 9 Col 5)

Two PDD X-Ens promoted

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Sept 2: The Government has promoted two Incharge Executive Engineers of PDD as I/C Superintending Engineers.

Those promoted as I/C SEs are Nazir Ahmed Dar and Parveen Gupta. While Mr Dar has been placed as Incharge SE Bijbehara Circle of M&RE, Mr Gupta has been directed to report to Chief Engineer M&RE Jammu till further orders.

Geelani calls for strike on Sept 7

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Sept 2: Hurriyat Conference (G) Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani today called for complete shutdown on September 7 against the Zubin Mehta's musical concert that is being held at Shalimar Garden in Srinagar.

While addressing a press conference at his Hyderpora residence, Geelani appealed people to stage peaceful protests after Friday prayers on September 6, over Mehta's concert.

The concert is being held at Shalimar Garden in Srinagar on September 7 and 1500 guests with 700 from outside are attending it. The Shalimar garden is being given a facelift for the concert. (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

Pak resumes heavy firing, shelling on LoC

*** Fresh wave of panic among border villagers**

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Sept 2: After a lull of three days, Pakistan Army today again opened heavy firing and shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) in Balakote and parts of Mendhar sector in Poonch district sending a fresh wave of panic among the people living in forward areas including worst affected Deri Dabsi.

Troops, who retaliated the firing effectively from this side, were also conducting searches in forward areas anticipating infiltration attempts from across the Line of Control (LoC) under the cover of firing by Pakistan Army.

Official sources told the Excelsior that Pakistani posts of Goga, Cheer and Tikri manned by 656 Mujahid Regiment started heavy firing and shelling in Balakote and parts of Mendhar

sector in Poonch district at 11.15 am. Indian troops retaliated with equal caliber of weapons and



Troops retaliate Pakistan firing in Balakote sector under the tricolor on Monday.

other devices. "Intensity of firing and shelling from across the LoC was very high during initial one and a half hours after which it came down to medium and small arms firing that continued till late this evening," sources said, adding that some shells fell close to populated villages triggering panic among the people putting up there.

However, there were no casualties or damage of Army or civilians on Indian side in Pakistan firing and shelling. Casualties, if any, on the other side were not known.

The last incident of Pakistan firing had been reported on intervening night of August 29 and 30 at Pallanwalla sector in Akhnour, Sabjian and Hamirpur sectors in Poonch district. An Army jawan was injured in Pakistan firing in Pallanwalla sector.

This was 46th ceasefire violation by Pakistan Army in the past 27 days in twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri apart from Pallanwalla, all falling along the LoC.

Sources said Pakistan Army was now also trying to push infiltrators inside the Indian territory from launching pads across Poonch district under the curb of firing. Few days back, (Contd on page 9 Col 1)

Master Plan submitted to CZA, basic works to take off shortly

Govt makes headway towards setting up of modern zoo in Jammu city outskirts

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Sept 2: Making headway towards establishment of first-ever modern zoo in the outskirts of Jammu city, the State Government has submitted detailed Master Plan to the Central Zoo Authority (CZA), which has already agreed in-principle to render all possible assistance to the Jammu and Kashmir State in this regard.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that the establishment of modern zoos—one each in Srinagar and Jammu, was

mulled in 2010 but the steps for giving practical shape of these plans were initiated in the last quarter of 2012 when the Wildlife Department started exercise to identify the area for the purpose in Srinagar as well as Jammu.

Though area for establishment of zoo in Jammu was identified within shortest possible time yet the same for Srinagar is yet to be selected by the Wildlife Department. In Jammu, huge area has been identified at Khanpur near Nagrota, sources said.

They disclosed that after

detailed survey through the experts the Master Plan of the zoo at Khanpur Nagrota was prepared and few days back the same was submitted to the Central Zoo Authority, sources said. "At present the Master Plan is under consideration at the Central Zoo Authority and after detailed examination the same will be placed before a national level committee for clearance", sources added.

According to the sources, the upcoming zoo will be unique in many ways having facilities like Children Park, Wild Safari, Aquarium and invertebrate con-

servation centres. "As the Central Zoo Authority has already agreed in principle to extend all possible assistance to the J&K Government for establishing two modern zoos, the Wildlife Department will shortly begin the basic works in order to complete the same well before the approval from the national level committee", they added.

When contacted, Chief Wildlife Warden, A K Singh confirmed that Master Plan has been submitted to the Central Zoo Authority, adding "hopefully the Central Zoo Authority will (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

Draft proposal sent to Law Deptt for opinion

Process set into motion for 8 pc reservation to Paharis

Nishikant Khajuria

JAMMU, Sept 2: In a significant development, the State Government has set the process in motion for according reservation to Pahari speaking people in Jammu and Kashmir on the pattern of SC/ST and other categories under quota.

A draft proposal in this regard suggesting total eight per cent reservation to the community has been prepared by the J&K Social Welfare Department in consultation with the State Advisory Board for

Development of Pahari Speaking People and the same has been forwarded to the Law Department for its opinion, official sources informed the Excelsior.

For accommodating the Pahari community within 50 percent maximum limit of total reservation, the draft proposal also suggests a cut in five per cent reservation to RBA (Resident of Backward Area) category, sources added.

The Law Department is studying the proposal, which will be discussed soon in a joint meeting with the Social

Welfare Department and the Pahari Board for approval to send the same to State Cabinet for final nod, sources further said.

Pertinent to mention here that the Pahari speaking people, who comprise around eight per cent population of Jammu and Kashmir, have been consistently demanding reservation in Government jobs and professional colleges on the pattern of other communities under reserved categories.

Even as all the major political parties of J&K are unanimous over according reservation

to Paharis, the demand is being opposed by some Gujjar leaders on technical grounds with apprehensions that the move could harm their interests.

However, according to the sources, while recommending eight per cent reservation for the Paharis, the proposal does not suggest any decrease in the quota for any other category except RBA.

According to the draft proposal, the existing quota of 20 percent to RBA will be reduced to 15 percent with the granting of eight per cent (Contd on page 9 Col 3)

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